United Nations S/2002/1100

Security Council

Distr.: General
2 October 2002
English
Original: Arabic

Letter dated 30 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Further to my previous letters concerning the acts of piracy and provocation being committed by the United States naval forces that are on station in the Arabian Gulf against the wishes of the peoples of the region, I should like to inform you that these forces are continuing to take hostile action against vessels carrying civilian merchandise in Iraqi territorial waters and elsewhere. The patrols of the invading United States Navy, joined by units of the Australian fleet, intercept vessels and assault and question their crews. They also sometimes detain ships and their crews for long periods of time, and they have in the past sunk some of them. I present to you hereunder some examples of these practices.

1. On 7 July 2002 the Iraqi tugboat Al-Yarmuk was intercepted by the Australian frigate bearing the hull number 05, and it was encircled while it was engaged in conducting chemical and bacteriological analyses and taking readings of radiation levels. Rubber boats were also launched against the tugboat Al-Rayah and against tender No. 1. They left them only when the vessels moored at Mina' al-Bakr.

2. On 22 July 2002 armed craft from the United States frigate intercepted the Iraq Ports Authority tugboat Al-Bakr inside our territorial waters as it was making its way to carry out maintenance work on buoy No. 1 in the Umm al-Ma`arik channel. United States troops boarded the vessel by force of arms and restrained its crew. They then released the vessel and its crew, and it resumed its course towards the port at Umm Qasr.

3. On 28 August 2002 naval forces from the United States frigate detained boat No. 80/Basrah, which belongs to Muhammad Ali Shakir Khaz`al. The boat and its crew were released on 31 August.

4. On 13 September 2002 the Iraq Ports Authority coastal tender Al-Abid, loaded with Australian wheat and heading from Umm Qasr to the Basrah silo, came under armed attack from five military craft from the Australian frigate, each carrying 10 men. Armed men boarded the tender by force of arms, restrained its crew, searched the vessel in its entirety, broke the cabin locks, interrogated one of the officers and also lowered the Iraqi flag. They left the tender, and it headed for Basrah. Two craft from the Australian frigate again intercepted the same tender and searched it. After contacting the first frigate and ascertaining that it had already been searched, they released it.

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5. On 16 September 2002 the Iraq Ports Authority coastal tender Al-Fida' was intercepted by naval craft from the Australian frigate with 20 armed men on board as it was proceeding from the port at Umm Qasr to the Basrah silo with a cargo of wheat. The armed men boarded the tender by force of arms, restrained its crew and searched it in its entirety. They then released the tender and its crew, and it proceeded on its way to the Basrah silo.

The presence of units of the United States Navy and their attacks, with the assistance of units of the Australian fleet, on vessels carrying civilian merchandise in the Arabian Gulf constitute acts of aggression and endanger the movement of civilian shipping in the Arabian Gulf. They are incompatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international norms governing the safety of maritime navigation. The United States of America and those who assist it must bear full legal responsibility for them. Iraq affirms its right, in accordance with the principle of international responsibility, to seek compensation for the damage sustained by it or by its nationals as a result of the criminal acts being committed by these invading forces against ships in the Arabian Gulf region.

We urge you to intervene in order to prevent acts of aggression and terrorism by the United States that are in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, public international law and international humanitarian law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Permanent Representative